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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

March 14, 1938

Subject: "MORE NOTES ON HOT WEATHER COMFORT." Information from the Consumers' Counsel, engineers and architects of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and home economists of the Pennsylvania State Experiment Station.

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Some people go through the hot weather complaining of the heat and mopping their brows. Other people set about seeing what they can do to keep their families well and comfortable when the mercury climbs high.

The Consumers' Counsel of the U. S. Department of Agriculture recently collected some hot-weather health hints from the U. S. Public Health Service. Doctors there made suggestions about exercise, sleep, and food to keep you feeling well on hot days. Here's what they have to say about exercise: "Take it easy in hot weather. Don't be too active when the sun is at its peak. Don't suddenly take a lot of exercise when you haven't been active all winter. And don't exercise just before or just after eating." The doctors also remind you that one of the healthiest summer sports is swimming. They say, too, that cool showers are a big help in keeping your body invigorated during the heat.

And sleep is important in hot weather, in spite of what many people think. The doctors say get plenty of sleep in summer, and do your sleeping at regular intervals. Our Mexican and South American neighbors have the right idea when they take their regular noonday siesta.

Moving air in your bedroom is always a help to refreshing sleep. On still hot nights a fan will keep the air circulating. But keep the fan on the floor below your bed, or up on a level above it, so you won't lie in a draft.

Many people would feel better on hot days if they drank more water. Doctors of the Public Health Service say drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water a day. If you perspire a good deal, your body loses both moisture and salt. So make up for

the loss by drinking salty water now and then, or eating salty foods. Ever notice that people in the South where the ~~summers~~ are hot eat a good deal of salty meat? The U. S. Army now issues salt tablets to soldiers who are going on long marching trips in hot weather.

As for clothing for hot weather, the lightweight, light-colored, and loosely fitting clothes are always good. Gingham, percales, chambray and seersucker as well as medium-weight broadcloth are old favorites for summer dresses, and they are still some of the best choices for women's wear. For men seersucker, hopsacking, gabardine, linen and linen-like cottons make cool suits. The weight and the weave both combine in making a fabric feel "cool" or "hot". Naturally, thin, light weight, open-weave material usually feels "coolest".

Some people try to keep cool on hot days by filling up on cold drinks that are largely sugar and water--really just liquid sweet. But sugar happens to be one of the heat-producing foods. Once the first chilling sensation has worn off, the sweet drink may make you warmer than before. According to the Pennsylvania Experiment Station, you'll be more comfortable if you go easy on heat-producing foods like sugars, starches and fats in summer. Go light on fried food, pastry, gravy, fat meat, candy, sweet drinks and other foods rich in fat and sugar.

The Pennsylvania Experiment Station recently reported that fruits and vegetables are some of the best foods to fill up on in summer. They are naturally refreshing; are not heat-producing; help your appetite in hot weather; and provide minerals and vitamins to keep you feeling your best. Contrary to many people's opinion, such protein foods as lean meat, fish, eggs, and milk are good hot-weather foods, too.

You can do things about your house to make it more comfortable during the summer. Whatever you can do to keep the sun from shining directly on walls, roof and windows during the heat of the day is a help. Engineers and architects of the

Department of Agriculture suggest, for one thing, that shade trees may be called in to service as air-conditioners because they can protect the roof and walls from the sun's heat. Bushes and vines as well as trees help keep the house cool. But---you have to take care that bushes and vines don't grow so heavily that they make the house damp and cut off circulation of air.

Of course, some sort of window-shading helps, too. Slatted shutters and blinds have been used for generations to shut out the hot sun from the windows during the day. Ordinary window shades help too. They may lower the temperature as much as 2 or 3 degrees, engineers say. Porches may help in summer by giving shade, but in winter and on cloudy days they may darken the house when you want the sun.

Here's a tip from our neighbors in Cuba and some other tropical countries to the South. They paint their roofs white on the theory that light-colored roofs absorb less heat than dark-colored roofs.

Ventilation in the attic of your house helps, too. Open windows in the attic help most. Openings have to be of some size to keep the air moving. An electric fan in the attic or in any room is effective if you locate it so that it keeps air moving and stuffy air-pockets from forming.

That's all the hot-weather tips for today.

